

# *Nurturing Eemân in Children*

تنمية الإيمان في الأطفال

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## Chapter 1

### 'Aqeedah, Eemân, and Ihsân

The principles of 'aqeedah (belief) and eemân form the foundation of our religion. They are also significant for the task of parenting. The meaning of these terms and their relation to parenting will be discussed in the following section.

#### The meaning of 'Aqeedah

'Aqâ'id (plural of 'aqeedah) are those things that people's hearts affirm and believe in; things that people accept as true. It is certain and firm belief, without doubt. 'Aqeedah is knowledge that one believes in the heart. In Islam, this would be matters of knowledge that have been transmitted in authentic reports from Allah and the Messenger (ﷺ) (Ṣalla Allâhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam — Blessings and peace be upon him).<sup>1</sup> Allah (ﷻ) mentions,

﴿ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا تَفْرِقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ﴾ [البقرة: ٢٨٥]

«The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.' And they say, 'We hear, and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination.'» (Qur'an 2: 285)

<sup>1</sup> Al-Ashqar, *Belief in Allah*, pp. 29-31

People throughout the world have various belief systems, but the only true 'aqeedah is found in the religion of Islam, since this is the complete, perfect and protected religion. Allah (ﷻ) says,

﴿... الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَمَضْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ...﴾ [المائدة: ٣]

«... This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour upon you and have approved for you Islam as your religion...» (Qur'an 5: 3)

And:

﴿... وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ...﴾ [التحل: ٨٩]

«... And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things...» (Qur'an 16: 89)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: «I have not left anything that Allah has commanded of you except that I have ordered you to do it. And I have not left anything which He has prohibited for you except that I have prohibited it for you.»<sup>2</sup>

Allah has guaranteed to protect the Qur'an and Islam until the end of time. Allah (ﷻ) affirms,

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾ [الحجر: ٩]

«Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [the Qur'an], and indeed, We will be its guardian.» (Qur'an 15: 9)

This 'aqeedah, as found in the Qur'an and the Hadith,<sup>3</sup> convinces the mind with evidence and fills the heart with eemân, certainty, and light. Other religions are either based on falsehood or

<sup>2</sup> Al-Bayhaqi, Aṭ-Ṭabarâni; a sound, authentic hadith

<sup>3</sup> Hadith (ḥadeeth): the collected sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law

have become distorted, although they may contain some grains of truth here and there.<sup>4</sup>

### The importance of Islamic 'aqeedah

True Islamic 'aqeedah is as essential for humans as water and air. Without it, humans are lost and confused. It is the only 'aqeedah that can answer questions that have preoccupied the minds of the human race for centuries: Where did I come from? Where did the universe come from? Who is the Creator? Why did He create us and the universe? What is our role in this universe? What is our relationship to the Creator? Are there other, invisible worlds beyond the world that we can see? Is there another life after this life? These unrelenting questions have existed since the beginning of time and can only be answered by Islam.<sup>5</sup>

### The relationship between 'aqeedah and eemân

'Aqeedah (belief) forms the foundation and basis of eemân (faith or firm belief). Eemân is based upon 'aqeedah that is firmly established in the heart. Eemân is verbally declared and is confirmed by actions conforming to the dictates of 'aqeedah. Correct 'aqeedah is important so that one's eemân will be acceptable and strong. The more knowledge of 'aqeedah that a person possesses, the more his or her eemân will increase and grow.<sup>6</sup>

### The meaning of eemân and Mu'min

Eemân, then, is sincere faith that develops from an individual's belief system. This faith impacts the person's thoughts, feelings,

<sup>4</sup> Al-Ashqar, *Belief in Allah*, p. 34

<sup>5</sup> Al-Ashqar, *Belief in Allah*, p. 35

<sup>6</sup> Al-Ashqar, *Belief in Allah*, pp. 39-40

speech, and actions. The Islamic belief system is comprehensive, but is built upon six basic pillars: belief in Allah, the angels, the prophets, the books, the Day of Resurrection and the hereafter, and divine decree. To understand the true meanings of eemân and *mu'min* (believer), it is prudent to turn to a well-known hadith<sup>7</sup> on this topic. In the hadith, Angel Gabriel<sup>8</sup> asks Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to explain the meanings of Islam, eemân, and ihsân. The Prophet (ﷺ) replied wisely.

On the authority of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) — (May Allah be pleased with him) who said: «One day, while we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), there came before us a man with extremely white clothing and extremely black hair. There were no signs of travel on him and none of us knew him. He [came and] sat next to the Prophet (ﷺ). He supported his knees up against the knees of the Prophet (ﷺ) and put his hands on (the Prophet's) thighs. He said: O Muhammad, tell me about Islam. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) answered: Islam is to testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to establish the prayers, to pay zakât, to fast [the month of] Ramadan, and to make the pilgrimage to the House if you have the means to do so. He said: You have spoken truthfully. We were amazed that he asks the question and then he says that he (Allah's Messenger) had spoken truthfully. He said: Tell me about eemân (faith). He [the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)] responded: It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in the divine decree, the good and the evil thereof. He said: You have spoken truthfully. He said: Tell me about ihsân (goodness). He [the Prophet] answered: It is that you worship

<sup>7</sup> *hadith (hadeeth)*: a saying or action of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers

<sup>8</sup> Angel Gabriel or *Jibreel* in Arabic: the archangel who transmitted the verses of the Qur'an and other communication from Allah to Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) (Editor)